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153 Some of these people are able to repeat a tale lasting five or ten
773 minutes after having heard it twice or thrice only. It is to be wondered at therefore that they have so few traditions, or rather that these traditions do not reach further back in history. In fact, when you inquire into what they know of the past, you find first, a story about their origin which bears a strongly mythical character ; secondly, traditions more or less legendary about the migrations of the various clans ; thirdly, genealogies of the royal family containing eight to ten names, and fourthly, historical narratives which go back as far as the beginning of the 19th century, and which give the impression of true historical facts. History, amongst the Thongas, begins only one hundred years ago. What took place before that is almost entirely forgotten. This fact shows that, even amongst races possessing a good memory, before the introduction of a system of writing traditions regarding the ancient past can hardly be relied upon.

A. Prehistoric Period.

773 1) *The story of man's origin* is this. The first human beings emerged from reeds. Each tribe came into this world with its present characteristics. For instance the Ba-Bvesha, who are great blacksmiths, knew how to forge their iron picks from the first day. They "came out" holding them. The Ba-Ronga group calls the first ancestors of humanity Likalahumba and Nsilambowa, viz. the one who brings a glowing cinder in a shell (the man) and the one who grinds vegetables (the woman). The Ba-Djonga call them Gwambe and Dzabana. Another story universally believed tells us how death came amongst men by the fault of the chameleon (See Part VI). All these stories are purely mythical and form part of the African Genesis which is met with in most tribes.

173 2) *Legends about the ancient migrations* of the various clans. Almost every clan pretends to have come from afar and, strange to say, they came from all the points of the compass. Two of their clans, without doubt, come from the north, the Ba-ka-

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173 Baloyi and the Tembe. The Ba-ka-Baloyi, they say, came down the valley of the Limpopo in very remote times ; they came in such numbers that they opened out a wide track as wide as a wagon road : "It is the old, old road of Gwambe, the first man on earth who emerged from the reed. So well was the road trodden that to this day the grass has not grown over it." Many Thongas pretend to have seen it, white and straight, stretching from the northern bank of the Limpopo and going southwards through the desert, just like the road over which Attila passed ! At a certain place, near a rivulet where the Ba-Loyi rested, one can still see in the rock the print of the mortars of the women. "The stones at that time were not yet hardened, and they retained the marks made by the mortars in that old expedition, the marks also of the hemp pipes of the men and of their *matshuba*." (The *matshuba* are the little holes hollowed out by the Natives in four rows, as required in their favourite game called *tshuba*. See Part II, Chap. II.)

According to some of the Native historians, the Ba-Loyi came from the Ba-Nyai country along with the Ba-Nwanati, who also belonged to the Nyai or Kalanga race. They went southwards by that wonderful old road till they reached the sea coast not far from the mouth of the Limpopo. The sight of the sea, that broad unknown river, filled them with great fear. The Ba-Loyi felt they could not remain in such a dangerous neighbourhood and advised the whole party to go back to the north. In the meantime, however, their Nwanati friends had discovered a fruit not common on the African high veld, but very common on the sandy plains of the coast. In shape it was round, about the size of an orange, with a hard outer shell. When broken it was found to contain a number of stones, each wrapped in a delicate, strongly scented pulp, of which the Natives prepare an excellent dish. This fruit is called *makwakwa*. "We shall remain here to break open our *makwakwa*" said the Ba-Nwanati, and they bade farewell to the Ba-Loyi, who started back to their present abode. Hence the name Makwakwa now given to those Nwanatis.

173 The Nwanatis included the Makwakwas of Khambane and the
775 Malulekes. These latter separated from their brethren and

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returned north, to the country of the Ba-Loyi, led by their ancestor, Mashakatsi. This man, who was a great hunter, saw that he could easily defeat the Ba-Nyai who were settled in those parts, and brought back his followers with him. He became the founder of the dynasty of Maluleke. (For further details about these legends, see Addresses and Papers of the Joint Meeting of British and South African Associations for the Advancement of Science, Johannesburg 1905.)

As regards the Tembe clan, it is said to have come down as far as Delagoa Bay from the Kalanga country by the Nkomati river on a floating island of papyrus, and to have crossed the Tembe river and settled to the south of the Bay. An old saying alludes to this arrival and to the conquest of the country :

Phandje, phandje ra nala—Tembe kulu a wela.

As the palm leaf with its numerous feelers—so did the ancestor Tembe when he crossed.

He placed his sons in all the districts of the plain to govern in his name. The Tembe people, when they greet each other, sometimes use the salutation Nkalanga, i. e. man of the north or of the Kalanga country, and there is little doubt that, notwithstanding the legendary traits in this tradition, the fact itself of the northern origin of these clans is true. In the course of time the chiefs of Matutwen and Maputju, descendants of Tembe, became independent.

Most of the other clans point to Zululand or to Swaziland as having been their first abode, which they left to invade the low country of the coast. Mpfumu and Matjolo are both sons of Nhlaruti, who is said to have been the first invader ; from him sprang their two clans which have become independent of and even hostile to each other. The Nondwane families point to the neighbourhood of Komati Port as being the place from which they came. There were successive invasions of a peaceful character. These people still turn the face of their dead to the west, because the clan came from the Lebombo hills, and this rite proves that the tradition is well founded. The Nkuna, Khosa, and Hlabi clans also claim the same western or south-western origin. Amongst the Ba-Nkuna, some old men say they know

173 the precise place in Zululand whence their forefather Nkuna started and declare that they still have relatives there.

The Hlanganus and Hlengwes seem to have no tradition of
173 this kind. The only one I heard about the Hlengwes is this.
372 Tshauke, their first king, took as his wife the daughter of another
773 chief belonging to the Sono tribe. The Sonos knew how to cook their food, the Hlengwes did not: they were still ignorant of fire and used to eat their porridge raw. The son of Tshauke stole a glowing cinder from the Sonos and brought it home in a big shell. The Sonos were angry and declared war on the Hlengwes; but these latter, having gained new strength because they had been eating cooked food, won the victory. The son of Tshauke was then named Shioki-sha-humba-he who brings fire in a shell. This tradition is connected with the name of the first man, Likala-humba, which we have just explained, and it evidently bears a legendary character.

A similar story is told about the Shiburi clan (between the Olifant and Nkomati rivers). The old inhabitants of that country were the Masilanes and Nshongos. Once, at a very remote period, a man of the Shiburi clan, who was a Pedi and dwelt in Mabulanen, at the foot of the Drakensberg Mountains, pursued an eland which he had wounded and killed it in the territory of the Masilanes. He returned home to call his countrymen to cut it in pieces and to eat it according to the custom of hunters. These people then roasted the meat and handed over some of it to the Masilanes. The Masilanes used to eat meat raw as they did not know the use of fire. They found that cooked meat was much better than raw meat and told the Shiburis: "You are more intelligent than we are; we will serve you henceforth!" They therefore decided to get rid of their own chief. The Shiburis lighted a big fire, dug a hole and put the glowing embers into it. Then a mat was spread over the mouth of the hole and the chief was asked to sit upon it. He fell into the pit and died, and the Shiburis became the masters of the country. They abandoned their costume (the musubelo, viz. the piece of skin fastened between the legs as used by the Pedis) their language and their marriage-laws, married Masilane girls and became true Thongas (Mabuyandlela).

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173 372 If these stories had a historical foundation, it would prove that there was a time when the use of fire was unknown to certain Thonga clans. This, however, is hardly admissible. Fire has been used by human beings from the remotest antiquity, even in the paleolithic age, as far back as the Mousterian period, 20,000 years ago or more. It is probable that even before that time the dry velt of South Africa was often set on fire by lightning. But the recurrence of these legends, which remind one of the Greek myth of Prometheus, shows at any rate the immense value which the Thongas attach to the use of fire.

173 What were the races that the invaders found in the country ? Their name is still known in some places. In the Khosen Country, they were the Ntimbas and Shibambos. In the Nondwane, the Honwanas, Mahlangwanas and Nkumbas. All agree in saying that they were on a lower scale of civilisation (See Part IV) and that the new comers overcame them easily because they were more intelligent and possessed better weapons.

3) A third source of information regarding prehistoric times is to be found in the *genealogies of the royal families* which each clan has preserved more or less completely. I have gathered the following (1) :

Mpfumu : Nhlaruti, Mpfumu, Fayi, Maromana, Shilupane, Hasana (who attacked Lourenço Marques in 1868, was banished but received back his country in 1875 ; he died in 1878), Hamule, Zihlahla, Nwamantibyane (banished in 1896 to Western Africa where he died).

Tembe : Tembe, Nkupu, Nwangobe, Silambowa, Muhari (1781-1795), Mayeta (1823), Bangwana, Bukutje (1857), Mabayi (banished in 1890), Bukutje II.

Maputju : Maputju was the younger brother of Muhari and made himself independent of him. Muwayi, Makasana (1800-1850), Tlhuma, Musongi or Nozililo (1850), Ngwanazi (who fled to British Amatongaland after the Gungunyana war in 1895).

Nondwana : Libombo (probably reigning before the invasion),

(1) Compare E. Torre do Valle. Diccionario shironga-portuguez. Lourenço Marques. Imprensa Nacional 1906.

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173 Masinga, Ngomana, Matinana, Makwakwa, Papele, Khobete (who rebelled against the Portuguese in 1859), Mapunga, Mahazule.

Mabota : Mabota, Magwenyana, Lawulana, Magumbin, Mbakana, Nwatjonga.

Nwamba : Kopo-Nwamba, Rihati, Sindjini, Malengana, Nkolele, Mangoro, Mudlayi, Nwangundjuwana.

Khosa : Khosa, Ripanga, Mabone, Molelemane, Ripindje, Magudjulane, Nshalati Pukwana, Magudju, Shongele.

Nkuna : Nkuna, Shitlhelane, Rinono, Kulalen, Nwarinyekana, Muhlari, Ribye-ra ku-tika, Shiluvane, Muhlaba.

Maluleke : Mashakatsi, Dlamana, Shitanda, Shihala, Nkuri, Mhinga, Sunduza.

173 643 These genealogies, as one can see, generally contain eight to ten names. The list of Maputju chiefs has six only, because this dynasty is not so old and did not begin before the end of the XVIII[th] century. But all the others are longer. I do not pretend that they are absolutely correct ; in the same clan, there are sometimes variations according to the informants. There may have been links omitted in the chain because, to the Natives, a grandson is a son, just like a real son. On the other hand, the law of succession amongst the Thongas calls to the chieftainship the younger brothers of the deceased chief ; so some of these names may very well belong to brothers. Therefore it does not at all follow that eight names correspond to eight different generations. If that were so, estimating a generation at 30 years, we should conclude that the first chief lived some 250 years ago, viz. in 1650 ; but I have found conclusive proof that, for some of these genealogies, the first name in the list was already known in 1550. So we must consider these genealogies as being in fact too short. Many names must have been dropped out in the course of time.

173 The proof to which I allude has been afforded by the Portuguese reports published in the Mémoire addressed in 1873 to the President of the French Republic, who was called to act as mediator in the conflict between England and Portugal about the right of possession of the southern part of the Bay (Lisboa.

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173 Imprensa Nacional). In this interesting publication we find the oldest documents relative to the Bay and, amongst others, we read the following account in a Report of the Portuguese chronicler Perestrello, written in 1554 : "Into the Bay flow three rivers... The first one to the south, is called Zembe. It separates the land of a king of that name from the dominion of the king Nyaka... The second is the river of the Holy Spirit or of Lourenço Marques. It separates the land of Zembe from the land of two other chiefs whose names are Rumu and Mina Lebombo. The third and last is the Manhisa, so called after a Kafir of that name who governs there." In these statements we can easily recognize the names of the actual clans of Tembe (Zembe), Mpfumu (Rumu), Lebombo and Manyisa. These names were already known at that time and the chiefs to whom they apply were settled in the same country where they now are or not far from it. The chief Nyaka has left his name to the Inyak Island. It seems that his dynasty was then reigning over a larger tract of country than now. It is possible that he was confined to the island where his descendants now live, by the military operations of Maputju. Let us remark moreover that Zembe and Manhisa were names applied not only to those two chiefs, but to *rivers*. Zembe is the actual Mi-Tembe which flows between the Tembe and Matjolo countries, and Manhisa is evidently the Nkomati which crosses the Manhisa country some fifty kilometers higher than the estuary. If the Natives already called rivers after the name of these chiefs, it is probable that the chiefs themselves were already dead, and had lived in a more or less remote past. All these arguments tend to show that four or five hundred years ago at least the chiefs Tembe, Mpfumu, Manhisa, Libombo, all of whom still have descendants, were already in the country round Delagoa Bay. I do not think any scientifically accurate statement could be made with regard to so remote a period and I propose this as a landmark in the history of South African Natives (1).

(1) For more details about the history of the Thongas and of the neighbouring tribes, see my article in the "South African Journal of Science", 1914: *The condition of the Natives of South East Africa in the XVIth Century according to the early Portuguese documents.*

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APPENDIX I (See p. 169).

The Chronology of Shinangana, a Thonga of Spelonken.

Speaking in 1905, he says :

Sixty-seven years ago, Shiluvane and the other Thonga chiefs fled before Manukosi (1838, or 1839?). 173

Three years later, battle with Matshekwane, Manukosi's general, who pursued the Nkunas (1842).

In the sixteenth year of the era, battle of Gologodjwen, when the Nkuna chief, Shiluvane, fought against the Ba-Pedi of Sekukuni (1855). In the nineteenth year, Manukosi dies (1858 or 1859? His death may have taken place as early as 1856).

Henceforth each year is known by its principal event :

Expedition of Shihahen (1859).

Beginning of the great war of succession between Manukosi's sons, Muzila and Mawewe. Muzila fled to Spelonken (1860).

Circumcision school at Mudjadji (1861).

We are plundered by Djiwawa (or Joao Albasini, the Portuguese Commander who for many years was the chief of the Thonga refugees of Spelonken) (1862).

Djiwawa goes to fight against Mawewe (1863) (1).

We are plundered by the Swazi army (1864).

Shiluvane, the Nkuna chief, settles in the Nyarin country (1865).

Djiwawa kills Ribole and Magoro (1866).

The Modjadji army fights with the Nyari clan (1867).

The Swazis plunder Modjadji's country (Buluberi) (1868).

Djiwawa plunders the people of Mashao (Spelonken) (1869).

Muzila's army returns from Mosapa (Gaza), and plunders Spelonken (Bvesha) (1870).

The Swazis plunder Makandju (1871).

Circumcision school of Madori in Spelonken (1872).

Daiman! (Opening of the Kimberley mines where Natives begin to go to work) (1873).

(1) According to Portuguese documents, this intervention of Muzila and Albasini took place in 1862, Mawewe having been definitely beaten on the 20th August 1862.

173 Birth of my child Rihlangana. Death of Shiluvane (1874).
Famine of Magadingele (1875).
Death of Nkambi, son of Mhalamhala, a Khosa (1876).
War of Makhanana of the Loyi country. Refugees come to Spelonken (1877).
The Makandju people kill Ñwashitine of Rikotjo (1878).
Birth of my child Ntitiri (1879).
Circumcision school of Mayingwe (1880).
Djiwawa goes to seize Sekukuni (1881).
War between the Boers and the English (1882).
Year of the comet (1883). Djiwawa's son, Sambana, becomes chief. Sambana plunders the village of a Venda called Mbekwa (1884).
Phundjululu : the vermin destroy the mealies (1885).
Circumcision school of Ñwamutjungu, a Hlanganu who had come from Spelonken (1886).
A Gwamba chief quarrels with Girifi. (Mr. Grieve, an old colonist of Spelonken) (1887).
Sambana beats a policeman (1888).
Death of Djiwawa (1889).
Sambana calls statute labourers (1890).
Death of Sambana (1891).
Circumcision school at Modjadji (1892).
My son Magondjwen starts on a journey (1893).
He returns home (1894).
We are struck by hail. Four people die (1895).
My son-in-law goes away (1896).
Epidemic among cattle. War of Makhube. We accompany the Boers (1897).
Matshona : Plague among oxen (1898).
Bahehemuki! The people of Gungunyana take refuge in Spelonken (after the war of Magigwana with the Portuguese) (1899).
The Boers attack Phefu, the Venda chief (1900).
The Whites fight. (Anglo-Boer war) (1901).
The English column chases the Boers away from Pietersburg ; Ñwashimbutane! The Son-of-the-Kid! (General Beyers, compared with a kid on account of his swift movements through the country during the guerilla war.) (1902).
Mugayo! Ndlala! The mealie flour bought from the Whites on account of the famine! (1903).
Of course many of these dates are doubtful... Many are of very

small importance; it seems childish indeed to mention as the only noteworthy event of the year 1888 the fact that Sambana, Albasini's son, had beaten a policeman. This shows, however, the historical sense of Shinangana; he wished to record that uneventful year in his chronicle, and he chose the most remarkable fact that had occurred in it, though it was, indeed, of no great importance. Thus he attained his object, which was to preserve a full record of all the years from 1858 to 1903. The chronology of Shinangana is a true feat of memory, and, as he remained free from any civilised influence, it is a feat that must be considered when dealing with phenomena of oral tradition amongst savages. 173